



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Monday, October 17, 2022, at 7:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the City of Forest Park to enhance, strengthen, and grow our city by collaborating with our community to provide the highest level of service. Striving to be recognized as a diverse community that values and respects all members. We will strive to provide fair, professional, and courteous service through transparency and open communication. As we work to achieve this mission, we will have integrity beyond reproach while employing fiscal discipline and innovation. In this work there are no praises and raises for mediocrity.

Website: www.forestparkga.gov
YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>
Phone Number: (404) 366.4720

FOREST PARK CITY HALL
745 Forest Parkway
Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez
The Honorable Allan Mears

The Honorable Dabouze Antoine
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper, City Manager
S. Diane White, City Clerk
Mike Williams, City Attorney

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm by Mayor Butler and she read the Mission Statement.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE: Invocation and pledge was led by Dr. Lula Gholson

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK: A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Angelyne Butler, MPA	Mayor, At-Large		✓
Kimberly James	Council Member, Ward 1		✓
Dabouze Antoine	Council Member, Ward 2		✓
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		✓
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		✓
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		✓

Javon Lloyd, Public Information Officer, Joshua Cox, IT Director, Chiquita Barkley, Finance Director, LaShawn Gardiner, Director Planning & Community Development, Shalonda Brown, HR Director, David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief, Bobby Jinks, Director Public Works, and Arthur Geeter, Purchasing Manager

PRESENTATIONS:**1. Presentation by Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Morcease J. Beasley, Superintendent of Clayton County Schools gave an update on the schools within Clayton County and City of Forest Park.

Dr. Beasley - Is joined by Chief of Communication Jada Dawkins and wanted to highlight a few things. He is pleased to announce that the graduate rate is almost 80 percent, as a county it is at 79 percent. He is very pleased to share that Forest Park High School has finally hit the 80 percent mark and wanted to say congratulations.

We are hoping to have everyone at 90 percent by 2026, there is one high school that is still in the seventies at 77 percent and that is Drew High School, but we are moving in the right direction. I would like to make sure we encourage parents to make sure the students are completing Career Pathways. We know from the data that when the students complete a pathway, they graduate at a rate between 94-98 percent.

There is only about 50 percent of the students completing a pathway right now. They have an opportunity to earn up to thirty-two credits, it only takes three credits to complete a pathway, so they have many options and opportunities.

We do have a virtual learning program this year, and we have about nine hundred students learning virtually, and everyone else is face to face. The process of designing the new Forest Park Middle School has begun, and our goal is to get the design approved in the upcoming months. We will then do the groundbreaking and get the old building demolished, so we can get to building the new facility.

Thanks, mayor, and all of you that may have participated in the Reimagining America Schools opportunities, where we can hopefully create a seamless relationship between the school and the community. We are excited that forest Park Middle School, that cluster will be one of our community school locations.

We expect that our parents will be engaged and informed about all the resources that will be available to them in that space. Mr. Hector is going to help us do an excellent job of making sure that our parents are connected to all the resources and opportunities; to ensure students and families have what they need to learn.

Councilmember Antione – Would you like to mention SPLOST?

Dr. Beasley – In March of 2023, we will put out another referendum SPLOST 7, 6 Early Learning Centers, 4 Elementary Schools, a new North Clayton High School, a modernized Lovejoy High School, and HVAC athletic facilities. If this county votes yes, we will be able to bring those things to fruition.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Thank you for being here, that shows your dedication to come and inform our people here in Forest Park and you are always welcome. Our community school initiative here In Forest Park, we are blessed as a county to be one of those hubs, and we are also blessed to be able to invest in positions like this. You always have our support, three of us work for the county, and I know Councilwoman Wells and Councilman Mears are always supporting our school with events and other things. Thanks for coming out and informing our people of the great things going on here in our county. There is a 5k this weekend at Lake Spivey, so come on and walk it out for mental health.

Councilwoman Wells – Thank you for being here, giving us and our community the information we need. Thanks for your hard work and everything you have done to contribute to Clayton County. I am very excited about Forest Park High School because it was a mess when I was there.

Dr Beasley – Forest Park had an increase in advancement placement scores. We need to do a better job making sure you get that data; so, you can tweet about what is going on with your schools.

Councilmember Mears - Thank you for being here. My wife, father, and his sisters all graduated from Forest Park Middle when I was at Forest Park High School, which goes back to railroad time. It is time to build it over.

Councilmember James – I do not always complain, I want to put that on the record. Thank you so much for all you do for our city and our schools and our county. I appreciate it.

Mayor Butler – I want to thank you, I have sat in many settings in which people would speak about the past as it relates to Clayton County Public Schools, but in present tense. Each time I correct them know that you cannot mix the two. I tell them what Clayton County School is currently. There is information like this that people cannot wrap their heads around that we have changed, we have progressed, we have grown and evolved into this fantastic school system, and you are the leader of it: and I thank you for everything that you have done.

As a municipality we know people into the school system, but it is also the community, so we must do our part and we are doing our part. I just want you to know that this is truly a partnership, and I am so grateful to work with you.

Dr. Beasley – Thank you correcting them, because we cannot describe even our country on what happened in 1865, that is our history; so, let us talk about and focus on where we are today. I can assure you this school system because I am here in Forest Park, they are moving in the right direction and all of you should be very proud.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2. 3rd Public Hearing and Adoption of the Ordinance to Establish the Ad Valorem Tax Millage Rate for the City of Forest Park, Georgia

It was moved to open the Public Hearing for the Millage Rate

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

There were no speakers for or against the Millage Rate

It was moved to close the Public Hearing for the Millage Rate

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

It was moved to adopt the ordinance for millage rate of 16.743

Motion made by Councilmember Mears, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)

There were two (2) speakers:

Melanie Carter – Is back to see if she would get the speed breaker she asked about, because no one contacted her. She asked, do all the council members have to live in Forest Park, pay taxes here or own a house here? She stated that she was trying to figure out something. You call my house and ask do you have my support; I need to know when I come here, do you all support me and my family? You ask if you could get my vote, and I say yes, I am asking for a speed breaker, and I do not know where I am with it. You are talking about Christmas lights, but you are not talking about saving lives and kids. I did get one good thing out of this when the superintendent spoke, it is all about the kids.

Carl Evans – Has a concern about the new telephone system. You have disconnected the direct line that citizens have had for years to reach people. There have been multiple citizens complaining that they do not get to talk to a person anymore, all they get is a voicemail; and no returned call and I have experienced it too. I would like to see the city go back to real customer service, because he does not want to talk to a machine. He still has things that have not been taken care of. He has limbs that have been out over a year and have not been picked up, there is also a pile that has been out for over a month that no one has picked up. There is a problem with the street sweeper not backing up to get what it misses. I suggest you do not make it harder for the people or do away with the direct lines and have better communication. For instance, National Night Out a lot of citizens had no clue you were having the program that night. So, we need to work on communication in this city.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to adopt the council agenda as printed.

Motion made by Councilmember Akins-Wells, Seconded by Councilmember James.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- 3. Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from October 3, 2022, and Special Called Meeting Minutes from October 12, 2022 - City Clerk**

It was moved to approve the minutes from October 3rd and Special Called meeting minutes of Oct. 12th.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember Mears

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

OLD BUSINESS:

- 4. De-Annexation Request of Parcel# 13014D A002Z – Department of Planning & Community Development**

It was moved not to approve the de-annexation of Parcel #13014D A002Z

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Governing Body Comments/Discussions:

Councilmember Antione – Wanted to know why she was not in favor.

Councilmember James – It is less than an acre or so across from Hendricks Drive and there is a home right next to it, and if we De-Annex it we have no control over what goes there, right now it is zoned as residential. With the county the adjacent property is also zoned residential, but by chance if they want to change the zoning, we do not have any control over it. During her conversation with the county there is no issue working with different municipalities when it comes to development, and she thinks it would be in the best interest of the city not to de-annex it.

Mayor Butler – Was a conversation had about them annexing the unincorporated area to Forest Park, instead of de-annexing Forest Park, annexing in unincorporated?

City Manager – This was a request from the applicant to the county to de-annex, which is why they came to us to ask for permission to de-annex, but the conversation about annexing into the city has not been had.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

NEW BUSINESS:

- 5. Council approval of allocating funds to the City Edge Project to administer Rapid Rental Assistance on behalf of the city – Executive Offices**

It was moved to approve allocating funds to City Edge Project

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember James.

Governing Body Comment/Discussion:

Councilmember James – Wanted to know if they could also implement a housing repair, to the services.

City Manager – That is something that will be brought back on November 7th, because we have not had that discussion with them or any agency, but the city cannot facilitate it, but it will be a discussion.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

- 6. Council Approval of Purchasing Christmas Lights – Recreation & Leisure Services**

It was moved to approve the purchase of new Christmas lights for the city

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember James.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

7. Council Approval of Additional Funds for Waste Management Contract - Public Works Department

It was moved to approve additional funds for the Waste Management contract

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:

Councilmember James – Congratulation to all the staff members, recognized during the city managers report. Welcome to all the new staff members. Regarding the speed break, I know that there is a process that it must go through before it can be placed. I am not sure of your address and what has been done, but we can investigate that. As far as the question about serving on the council, yes you do have to live in the city, you do not have to own though. In fact, you would have to live in your perspective ward unless you are the mayor, then you can live wherever in the city.

As far as direct communications are concerned, we cannot go backwards, but I have had a couple of people call that were not aware of the number change. I know we have done some online things to make sure the residence is informed, so maybe we need to do a letter to the residence. We can do some sort of palm card with the actual extensions or something to make sure people are educated. Then maybe we can have a go to operator, where they can press zero and go straight to someone, and that person can direct them to the perspective area.

This is the third Thursday, which is when I do my Ward meeting. There will be subject matter experts there at 696 Main Street and we will also be broadcasting live. The information will also be available online, and it will be at 5:00 pm, and there will be information available about what is going on in each of the departments.

I would also like to say congratulations to Ms. Brown and her team for putting on the Employee Appreciation Day. Big shoutout to public works and the tug of war, they beat everybody. One of the guys made a statement: we carry the city on our shoulders. That is why they are the strongest, but we will be ready the next time. Ms. Brown said we would do something for the employees in the spring also.

Early voting started today and there are eight locations where you can early vote. One of those locations is at our senior center. Voting is from 8-7p Monday- Friday, Saturday, October 22nd & 29th 9-5p., Sunday, October 23rd-30th 2-5 pm. Then on regular voting day you will go to your area poll. Ward 1 polling area has moved from Forest Park Middle School to Dr. Beeler's Church on Main Street.

Councilmember Antione – Thank you all for coming out. Tonight, is going to be very cold. We have the only Men, Women & Children Shelter on Thurman Road. If you know of anybody that is going to be outside in the cold that is where they would call to get some help. I would like to give a shoutout to Captain Whitehead and his staff that came in. I would like to give a shoutout to Bruce, the only one that sent me a card to say thank you out of all the three hundred employees, for voting for the check. I would like to give Ms. Diane's, staff a shoutout for the programs we receive every month after the meetings, all of this must be typed up. Do not think your work is going unnoticed, thank you for all you do for us.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Welcomed the new employees to the Forest Park family. Wanted to shoutout HR and Parks and Recreation for the celebration they put on for the employees. The employees are the engine to what makes the city run, so thank you.

Wanted to address Ms. Carter, and should have gotten back to her, gave his apologies. He does not want her to think that her councilmember is just one of those people that only comes around when it is election time. He told her he texted one of the numbers that she gave, and it is a land line, so he texted the other one so that she would have his number. He will be reaching out to her with dates of when they can do the study, to see if it is eligible for the speed bump. Like you we share a passion, the children are our future.

Mr. Evans, thank you for bringing this to our attention, and we will be looking into seeing how we can move forward and make it more convenient. By no means do we want you to be disconnected, so we will have an update by the next meeting. Adopt a Road in Forest Park means you can adopt a road if you commit to cleaning it once a month. The Eye Catcher's Motorcycle Club adopted a road, and he thanked them. Our last Food Truck Friday was themed out to the Hispanic Celebration, for Hispanic Heritage Month. Thanks to the city for hosting the Hispanic Heritage Festival, a lot of people came out and supported it.

The upcoming tailgate is October 29th, we will also be celebrating the Fall Festival that day. We will also be celebrating some of our middle schoolers, which will be moving on to high school next year. There will be a costume contest and you know how Director Maxwell and the Parks and Recreation, do it at our park. We always go all out to celebrate our community. Thanks for coming, be safe, stay warm and go vote.

Councilmember Akins Wells – Sends her condolences to Ms. Ruby Sims, who was a long-time resident of Forest Park, as well as a family friend. She was full of life, and I had just seen her when I stopped by the senior center about two weeks ago. Ms. Carter, we do not have to own a home, just live in the perspective ward in the City of Forest Park.

I am an advocate for speed bumps and do not feel like we should have to go through so much to have our communities and streets safe. We discussed this at the last meeting, and we must do better with communicating with the people we work for. I am not talking about just Ms. Carter, but in general. Like Mr. Evans was said about the phone system, just because something seems better does not mean it is better.

The residents should not have to go through a lot to try and speak to someone, it should be a phone call and they should get an answer. I know things have changed, some for the good and some not so. Back in the day, when people wanted to get something done it was not hard for a council member to get it done.

I have been asking for certain things like speed bumps in my ward, now it must be for a certain speed, but if the speed limit needs to be changed to protect the kids, change the speed limit. People are not complaining about speed bumps, just to complain about speed bumps. The sidewalks and asphalt are something that I have been talking about for the last 2 years, in Ward 4, and absolutely nothing has been done.

I do not want you all to feel like you are coming to us, and we are not doing anything, just like you all want answers, I want answers too. I just emailed Dr. Cooper a lot of stuff and I am tired of not having the answers for the residence, because I am not the one to just get into office and do nothing. You elected me to work for you and that is what I want to do.

If it is something for the safety of our community, just do it. The residence should not have to keep coming up here to talk about speed bumps. I know it is a process, but what can we do to fix this. I went through the ward one day and a resident had put their own speed bump out, so I asked where they got it from. The city went it and took it up but did not want to put any out. So, we must do better for the residents.

November 1st, formally known as Wellness with Wells, we had to change the name for political reasons will hopefully be back. It will be Wellness in Ward 4 and we will do the same thing we have been doing which is promote wellness.

Community boards, I met with a resident last week. We have community members and business owners that want to be on the boards, because their voices matter too. Sometimes it can get political and people hand pick who they want to because they will be yes people. I have thought about getting a community board that consists of 10-15 people to let them know that their voices matter, and to hold monthly meetings to get input from the community.

If you know people that want to get more involved, that feel like they have a voice; and where we do not have to go in the back and choose who is going to sit on the boards and want to volunteer their time, please let me know. That way we can have people in our community that feel a part of the community and involved in the community. Lastly, a residence bought up when you walk in the front of city hall that it needs to be updated. The workers' office should be nice and comfortable for our workers. Dr. Cooper, can we talk about the speed bumps or putting up stop signs for the safety of our community. I want to also say excellent job. Everyone knows we are 100 percent for our employees, and anything that highlights them and their hard work, and give them time away from doing work, I appreciate that. I want the employees to know that I appreciate them, and the city appreciates them. Thank you, Ms. Brown, and everyone that had a hand in putting that together. Thanks for coming out.

Councilmember Mears – Thanked everyone for coming and gave a special shoutout to Ms. Brown and her team for putting together the Employee event. There was a lot of bonding, a lot of fun and everyone had a fun time. This is something we need to do more of, and it is in the work. Thank about your employees for the city, they do a lot from behind the scenes, and they need to get a lot of recognition.

Mayor Butler – I too would like to echo the sentiments of my colleagues, it was fun, and my team was undefeated in volleyball so, I will hold that title until the spring. It was a great event, and everyone had an amazing time, so thank you again for putting that together. I am going to ask Dr. Cooper to wrap things up, speak on the process of the traffic calming devices in general.

City Manager – One of the things Ms. Carter, I did ask them to reach out to you and I do apologize for no one doing so. However, there has been a speed study done on Mitchell Street in your area, and we do have the information that we are going through to make that determination. There are state laws and local ordinances that must be met before speed calming devices can be put in certain areas.

Speed limits in a city can be governed by that city, however, just as someone can complain it is going too fast, someone can complain it is going too slow. The state can come in and do their own study and determine that we arbitrarily reduce the speed. They can tell us no you have to not only put the speed back but increase the speed in that area because you are impeding the flow of traffic.

These are things we must go through to ensure that we are following the proper procedure so when things are put out as far as speed common devices, that we are within the local and state laws, but there must be a study done. We have been discussing how we get these things installed, so you will be hearing back from it.

I did ask PD to increase patrol in the area for speeders. I do not have the data back from them on how many stops or tickets were issued in the area, but we are taking the children and residents' safety seriously. We are looking into what can be done to reduce the speed. I do not want you to go away thinking we have not done anything, again I am apologizing for you not being reached out to. I know I have spoken to you because Councilwoman Wells introduced me to you, to speak with you. I did take that information and went back and did what we needed to do to get what we needed to get it done.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following issues: Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate)

It was moved to recess into Executive Session for Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate at 7:59pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

It was moved to reconvene into the Regular meeting at 8:15pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

It was moved to authorize the settlement agreement with Jeff Eady as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved to adjourn the Council Regular meeting at 8:15pm

Motion made by Councilmember Akins-Wells, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears